
**JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY**

Volume 20

Number 1



2009

1894 Liberty Head Nickel in AU50



**Very light wear only on high points.
There will be luster, especially in the protected areas.
Surface quality is important for AU grades.**

Photo and comments courtesy of www.BarberCoins.org

TOP 100 COINS SOLD HERE

<< 1885 Trade\$
NGC Proof 62

#7

<< 1792 Half Disme
PCGS AU55

#12

<< 1880 \$4 Coil Hair
NGC Proof 62

#18

<< 1802 H10c
NGC AU50

#62

<< 1895 \$1
NGC Proof 67

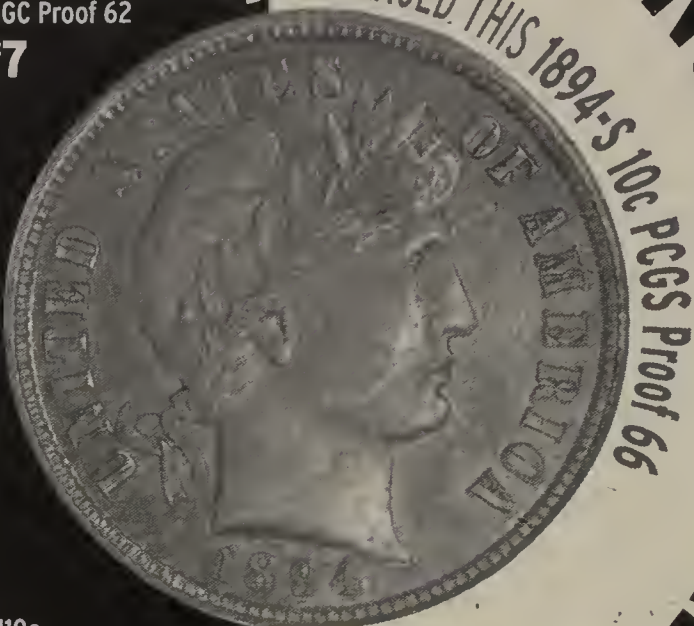
#43

<< 1875 \$3
NGC Proof 65
Ultra Cameo

#29

<< 1876-CC 20c
PCGS MS65

#24



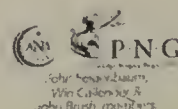
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JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded in 1989 by Steve Epstein
ANA Club Member C-146266

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Barber Society begins a new year and 2009 will offer many changes from recent years. Rather than comment about job losses, housing foreclosures and other topics, the numismatic arena seems more appropriate.

As financial markets took their bad turn, reports from 4th Q shows and auctions were positive. This effectively continued into FUN with some cautionary remarks focused on commodity coins, lower MS grades and dealers having high inventory levels. From mid January to today (Feb 22), I've received email from three or four national dealers offering collector coins with inventory reduction discounts. This picture presents a different view than the recent robust numismatic marketplace, but is hardly anything like the overall US or World economies. Those who have collected coins for a decade or longer know of revolving market cycles.

If we have entered a stage where prices are flat or in some decline, what does this signify? Here are a few ideas I offer:

- 1) some pricey coins may become more affordable;
- 2) the availability of rare dates may tighten up as owners hold these for better times;
- 3) national auctions and 400-dealer shows may slim down;
- 4) your local coin dealer may return to his former job (outside of numismatics) and some major dealers may fade from the scene;
- 5) favorable buying opportunities should increase locally, at shows and in major auctions;
- 6) for the collector with immediate financial resources, dealers who know your needs (a wantlist on file) may offer you material at a favorable price where a quick turnover is assured.

Our readers may have additional views on the above remarks.

Eileen informed me that Steve Hustad has written an enjoyable article on 'how I acquired coins,' a topic I had asked members to briefly respond to. I look forward to reading Steve's thoughts in the issue you have in hand and hope others (myself included) may write on this as well.

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan
philrph1892@cs.com



BCCS EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I am amazed at how quickly 2008 passed. My mother would say that's a sign I'm getting old. Thanks for reminding me, Mom. But also lately I find myself increasingly, at times reluctantly, drawn into the whirlwind of changes going on in the world around us. It is becoming all too easy to lose track of time. Accepting that, and knowing how busy or preoccupied we all can get, the fact that some of you still make the time to share your experiences, thoughts, opinions, and/or stories through an article, email or hand-written letter for the *Journal* makes me all the more appreciative of your efforts. So, to those who contributed to last year's *Journal*, "Thank you," and to all of you, please consider doing so this year.

We all collect Barber coins for one reason or another and it is always fun to get together with fellow collectors for the opportunity to swap stories or show off a particular coin. Scattered throughout the country like we are, the *Journal* is the next best thing we have to actually being there. In this issue, Pete Padilla gives us a look at his 1899 dime with multiple cracks, Rich Dula takes us back to 1962 (I remember it well), Tim O'Keefe tells how he got started collecting and Steve Hustad lets us in on the various ways he has added to his collection over the years. There is more information to be found in the "Barber Bits" section so give yourself a well-deserved coffee break, sit down and enjoy this issue.

The BCCS Liberty Head Nickel Census and Rarity Survey is well underway. All census/rarity surveys, whether done in printed form or via the BCCS website, should be returned by April 30th. John will have the complete Liberty Head Nickel census/rarity results ready for inclusion in either the fall or winter '09 *Journal*.

Those of you who have not as yet renewed your 2009 BCCS membership will find a renewal form inside this *Journal*. Please send in your annual dues as soon as possible.

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of \$50. Second place prize will be \$25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS May 25th

1899 Barber Dime with Five Die Breaks

By Pete Padilla

I have been interested in Barbers since I found my first Barber Dime, a 1908-O in Fine at a flea market in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I paid \$5.00 for it and later found out it was worth a bit more than that. I was hooked and have been working on my set off and on since then. Barbers are very hard to find in New Mexico and sometimes you have to take what you can get. The internet is a god-send to people who live in rural areas and that is how I've been adding to my collection.

Anyway, the purpose of this article is to talk about an interesting 1899 Barber Dime I recently acquired with five (5) die breaks in it, two on the obverse and three on the reverse. I bought an inexpensive microscope that hooks up to my computer and took some pictures of the die breaks. They're not the best, but you can plainly see the die breaks.

The first die crack, at about the 3:00 position on the obverse, runs from the rim of the coin through the "E" in AMERICA.



Also on the obverse, the second die crack, at the 1:00 position, runs at about a 45 degree angle from the rim to the bottom of the ribbon on Liberty's head close to the "O" in OF.



The third die break is found on the reverse at the 6:00 position and runs from the rim to the edge of the bow knot.



The fourth die break, again on the reverse, is at the 7:00 position and runs from the rim to about the junction of the vine and the first vine leaf on the left.



The fifth die break, also on the reverse, is at the 3:00 position and runs from the edge of the rim through the ear of corn and ends a short distance from the “E” in DIME.



I hope that you will find this as interesting as I did when I pulled out my pocket magnifier and said to myself, “Boy, that’s a lot of die breaks.”

Collecting Barber Dimes in 1962

By Rich Dula

On a trip to an antique shop, I came across a 1962 *Redbook* (*A Guidebook of U.S. Coins, 15th Edition* by R. S. Yeoman.) I'm sure very few people would give this well-used and slightly faded book filled with out-of-date information a second glance. I, on the other hand, immediately saw it as a numismatic time capsule, a veritable time machine that transported me back to a time when worthwhile coins could still be found in circulation and silver coins were still in use.

Grading coins was very difficult back then. The Barber Dimes were only valued in five grades: Good, Fine, Extremely Fine, Uncirculated, and Proof. The requirements for an Extremely Fine coin sound like today's Almost Uncirculated coins. For a coin to be Very Fine, it still had "to retain enough luster to be desirable." When was the last time anyone saw a VF coin with luster? This sounds like today's XF-45 grade. Obviously grading was a lot stricter back then. The only grade that sounded similar to today's grading was the grade of Good.

I believe the values assigned in 1962 are significant, as by 1962 Barber silver coins no longer were found in everyday circulation. (I recall finding a 1901 dime, and 1898 and 1899 quarters in well-circulated AG condition during the early 1960s.) Values in this 1962 *Redbook* were most likely a fairly accurate record of what coins were hard to find in the Barber series when these coins were still in circulation. I believe that years later when prices increased greatly, collecting by type became popular and people did not really care about dates. Many scarce dates were pretty much valued as common type coins - there wasn't any particular demand for these dates and, in fact, they were hard to find, so they were overlooked by collectors concentrating on type coin collecting. So, perhaps seeing what was regarded as scarce in 1962 can give us insight to possible underrated dates even today in 2009.

For this article, I decided to use the dates listed on the BCCS website that are the scarcer dates that we could offer rarity opinions on. Looking at the chart, the first column is the date of coin, second column is 1962 valuation in the grade of Good, third column is current 2008 valuation in grade of Good using *Coin World's* "Trends." The third and fourth columns are something I thought could give us a better understanding of value. The purchasing power of the 2008 U.S. dollar is a fraction of what it was in 1962. I decided to convert how much it would cost to purchase a given coin in silver .999 bullion. So, the third column is how much

silver bullion it would have cost for a certain date in 1962, and the fourth column is how much it would cost today in silver bullion. As I write this article (Fall, 2008), silver bullion is \$17.53/oz. In 1962, according to searches on the Internet, silver reached \$1.29/oz, so that value is used.

<u>Date</u>	<u>1962 - Good Condition \$</u>	<u>2008 - Good Condition \$</u>	<u>1962 - Silver \$1.29/oz</u>	<u>2008 - Silver \$17.53/oz</u>
1892-S	\$14.00	\$65.00	\$10.85	\$3.71
1893-P	\$1.50	\$9.00	\$1.16	\$0.51
1893-O	\$4.25	\$35.00	\$3.29	\$2.00
1893-S	\$4.25	\$15.00	\$3.29	\$0.86
1894-P	\$2.40	\$25.00	\$1.86	\$1.43
1894-O	\$25.00	\$70.00	\$19.38	\$3.99
1895-P	\$20.00	\$85.00	\$15.50	\$4.85
1895-O	\$40.00	\$400.00	\$31.00	\$22.82
1895-S	\$7.00	\$45.00	\$5.43	\$2.57
1896-P	\$2.50	\$12.00	\$1.94	\$0.69
1896-O	\$16.00	\$80.00	\$12.40	\$4.56
1896-S	\$25.00	\$80.00	\$19.38	\$4.56
1897-O	17.50	\$65.00	\$13.57	\$3.71
1897-S	\$6.00	\$20.00	\$4.65	\$1.14
1898-O	\$3.25	\$14.00	\$2.52	\$0.80
1898-S	\$3.00	\$8.00	\$2.33	\$0.46
1899-O	\$3.00	\$11.00	\$2.33	\$0.63
1899-S	\$2.75	\$8.00	\$2.13	\$0.47
1900-O	\$2.75	\$20.00	\$2.13	\$1.14
1901-O	\$1.00	\$4.00	\$0.78	\$0.23
1901-S	\$17.50	\$85.00	\$13.57	\$4.85
1902-O	\$1.00	\$4.00	\$0.78	\$0.23
1902-S	\$3.00	\$8.00	\$2.33	\$0.47
1903-O	\$0.75	\$4.00	\$0.58	\$0.23
1903-S	\$8.00	\$85.00	\$6.20	\$4.85
1904-S	\$7.00	\$45.00	\$5.43	\$2.57
1905-O	\$1.25	\$5.00	\$0.97	\$0.29
1905 micro O	N/A	\$35.00	N/A	\$1.99
1905-S	\$0.90	\$4.00	\$0.70	\$0.23
1906-O	\$0.75	\$6.00	\$0.58	\$0.34
1906-S	\$0.35	\$4.00	\$0.27	\$0.23
1907-D	\$0.60	\$4.00	\$0.47	\$0.23
1907-O	\$0.65	\$4.00	\$0.50	\$0.23
1907-S	\$0.30	\$4.00	\$0.23	\$0.23

<u>Date</u>	<u>1962 - Good Condition \$</u>	<u>2008 - Good Condition \$</u>	<u>1962 - Silver \$1.29/oz</u>	<u>2008 - Silver \$17.53/oz</u>
1908-O	\$0.75	\$6.00	\$0.58	\$0.34
1908-S	\$1.00	\$4.00	\$0.78	\$0.23
1909-D	\$1.75	\$8.00	\$1.36	\$0.47
1909-O	\$1.75	\$4.00	\$1.36	\$0.23
1909-S	\$1.75	\$8.00	\$1.36	\$0.47
1910-DD	\$0.50	\$3.00	\$0.39	\$0.17
1910-S	\$1.25	\$5.00	\$0.97	\$0.29
1913-S	\$5.00	\$20.00	\$3.88	\$1.14
1914-S	\$0.75	\$3.00	\$0.58	\$0.17
1915-S	\$1.50	\$7.00	\$1.16	\$0.40
Total Cost	\$259.20	\$1436.00	\$218.40	\$82.01
Difference		\$1176.80		-\$136.39
% Increase		454		
%Dccrease				-62.50

Lct’s look at the five most expensive coins from both time periods:

1962	2008
1) \$40.00 - 1895-O	1) \$400.00 - 1895-O
2) \$25.00 - 1894-O & 1896-S	2) \$85.00 - 1895, 1901-S & 1903-S
3) \$20.00 - 1895	3) \$80.00 - 1896-O & 1896-S
4) \$17.50 - 1897-O	4) \$70.00 - 1894-O
5) \$16.00 - 1896-O	5) \$65.00 - 1892-S & 1897-O

In 1962, there were six coins that, because of dates being priced the same, were in the five most expensive Barber Dimes category. In 2008, there were nine coins in this category. All of the coins that were in the 1962 five most expensive coins in the series are still there today. The dates of 1892-S, 1901-S, and 1903-S are newcomers to this top five most expensive in the series. Of particular interest is the 1894-O dime. In 1962 it was in the number two spot with only the 1895-O, the key to the series, being more highly valued. Today it is in the number four spot with six other coins being more highly valued (including the 1895-O).

So, in 1962 the 1894-O and the 1896-S were believed to be the two next scarcest coins to the 1895-O. I thought the 1894-O dime need to be looked at

further so I started to track the appearances of the 1894-O and the 1895-O dimes in Good and AG conditions on eBay. Over a two month period, the number of appearances of both dates was very similar. This persuaded me to upgrade my 1894-O dime when the opportunity came up in the grade of VG. To me, the 1894-O seems to be undervalued, unless a hoard of this date surfaced after 1962.

One of my favorite Barber Dimes is the 1905 Micro O. In 1962, this variety wasn't even listed in the Redbook. Today it is valued at \$35.00 in Good condition and very much sought after, especially in the higher grades.

By now I am sure many of you are looking at the 1962 "good old days" prices and are thinking what a great collection you could build and that the prices were incredibly cheap. Unfortunately, the purchasing power of the 2008 U.S. Dollar is a fraction of what it was in 1962. In 1962, the U.S. Dollar was linked to and redeemable in silver. So let's evaluate the prices of 1962 and 2008 in terms of .999 silver bullion, the last two columns on my chart.

In 1962, silver bullion reached \$1.29/oz, the figure I chose for this article. As I write this article, silver is \$17.53/oz. If you wanted to buy the key date 1895-O in Good condition it would have cost 31 ounces of silver bullion in 1962. Today it would cost 22.82 ounces of silver bullion. Even more astonishing, the 1894-O dime in Good would have cost 19.38 ounces of silver bullion in 1962, while today it would cost only 3.99 ounces of silver bullion. [On a side note, gasoline averaged 31 cents per gallon in 1962, so you could buy 4.16 gallons of gas for 1 ounce of silver bullion. Today, the price of a gallon of gas is \$3.83 per gallon so you can buy 4.58 gallons of gas - more than that same ounce of silver bullion would purchase in 1962. Perhaps the media should put less blame on the oil companies and more blame on the government for inflation and the resulting loss of purchasing power of the U.S. Dollar.]

In 1962, it would have cost \$259.20 to purchase all of the Barber Dimes in Good condition listed in this article. Today it would cost \$1436.00, an increase of \$1176.80 to purchase the same coins. Over the forty-six year period, this is a 454% increase in value, or a return of 9.87% per year. Silver bullion increased 1259% over this period, or 27.37% per year (although much of this gain came in recent years after the government exhausted its stockpile of silver bullion that it would sell on the open market). In 1962, it would have cost 218.40 ounces of silver bullion to buy all of the dates in this article. Today it would cost only 82.01 ounces of silver bullion. This is a decrease of 136.39 ounces of silver bullion or 62.50% less than it cost in 1962. So, in terms of silver bullion, prices for these Barber Dimes has actually decreased since 1962, and the same is true for many other items we use daily.

At any rate, the Barber Dimes in this article helped preserve the purchasing power of your 1962 dollar, not as well as silver bullion, but they are far more interesting to own than mere silver bullion in my opinion. I hope you enjoyed this trip to the past and, for those of you old enough to have been around back then, I'm sure it brought back some good memories. Oh, the price for the old, faded *Redbook* that provided the ticket back to 1962 was all of \$4.00, or .29 ounces of silver bullion.

BCCS Treasurer's Annual Report

Opening balance January 1, 2008 \$9126.14

Receipts

Dues	3675.00
Advertising	770.00
Back issues	268.00
Total	4713.00

Total funds available: \$13,839.14

I feel it is important to explain to you that we generated an unexpected \$1268.00 in funds in 2008 due to the fact that fifty-one members opted to re-new their dues for two years, a new member paid dues for ten years, we had an additional advertiser for the year, and we sold quite a number of back issues.

Expenses

Journal production	2004.39 (Vol. 18, #4, Vol. 19, #1-3)
Postage	1178.27
Literary prizes	75.00
Website	37.70
ANA dues	36.00
FUN dues	15.00

Total expenses: \$3346.36

Closing balance December 31, 2008 \$10,492.78

Barber Bits

Editor's note: The following is a note from one of our newest members, Harry, who informed me that he is 87 and has been collecting for many years. If you can be of assistance, let me know and I will put you in touch with Harry.

A note on how I got started. In 1960, it was the Lincoln Cent. At a small coin show a dealer called me over and said he had a quarter I might like - a 1913-S Barber, new condition. Nobody spent money to buy coins. He wanted \$1.25 for the quarter. I knew it was a key coin.

I finally bought the coin. A dollar would buy a lot in those days.

I have collected quarters ever since. I still need two coins - the 1901-S and the 1909-O in new condition. I will never get the 1901-S. Maybe you can help me with the 1909-O.



2008 Literary Contest Results

Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all members who submitted articles. Each article entered received votes which means it was appreciated and enjoyed by your fellow BCCS members. Our 2009 contest opens with this issue. To be entered, simply submit an article for publication in the *Journal*.

1st Place - \$50 - "A Lifetime of Collecting Barber Coins" by William Rodriguez

2nd Place - \$25 - "Investment Spotlight: Circulated Barber Dimes" by Rich Dula

3rd Place - 1 year FREE BCCS membership - "Is L-I-B-E-R-T-Y Overrated for Grading Barber Dimes?" by Anjeji Mercantile

The Dime Census/Rarity Survey received a write-in vote "for the tremendous effort involved and quality of census."



All Liberty Head Nickel census/rarity surveys, either in printed form or via the BCCS website, should be submitted by Apr. 30th.

Check out this link: <http://www.stellacoinnews.com/>

This is a new blog & library website of David Lawrence Rare Coins & Dominion Grading Service offering you free access to valuable research and reference books. To date it has published: David Lawrence's anecdotal stories *Tales from the Bourse*; *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars* by Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert; *The Complete Guide to Mercury Dimes, 2nd Edition* by David Lange; *The Complete Guide to Walking Liberty Half Dollars* by Bruce Fox; and *The Complete Guide to Franklin Half Dollars, 2nd Edition* by Rick Tomaska. You can read each entire book online FREE, no need to create a username or password. You can even comment on or augment a book with updated information.

I think this next statement deserves a drum roll. According to Marketing Supervisor Kim Ludwig, "Our next effort will be the Barber Series." **YES!!!**



2009 BCCS Meeting at the FUN Show

At the 2009 Florida United Numismatists show in January, the BCCS had its winter meeting, an informal gathering of Barber collectors, kicking off the 20th anniversary of the BCCS.

The meeting, held on Friday, the third day of the FUN show, was very casual, discussing the coin market and availability of Barbers on the show floor. A number of members brought coins for "Show and Tell." A number of beautiful Barbers were passed around the room, including some high eye-appeal AU and Mint State quarters and halves.

The highlight of the day, however, was an incredible VG10 1892-O Micro O half that was completely problem-free and original. And, it was slabbed and properly graded to boot! We talked a bit about that date and I reminisced about the day I first saw the Eliasberg Micro O in an MS68 holder at Dave Lawrence's table.

Speaking of that specific coin, the auction highlight of the show was the Heritage auction of the Dale Friend #2 All-Time Registry Set of Barber Halves in which that coin resided, an incredible set to behold.

At the show, there weren't many choice Barbers to be found on the floor, but some of the members found some dates they had been looking for. The find of the show belonged to one member who found an AU 1909-O quarter on the floor, and the dealer actually discounted it from the original asking price. Amazing. It always pays to look carefully, as you never know what you will find. I know the lucky collector, and that find made his month!

As for marking the 20th Anniversary of the BCCS, we discussed two potential activities, namely having a table at the ANA Club Runway at the summer convention in Los Angeles this August, where we can have a case to exhibit (when staffed) and information sheets about the BCCS. The ANA still has to decide how they will work the club runway and how much space is available in Los Angeles. I hope to get more information in Portland at the Winter ANA this month.

Another potential project that needs to be investigated, and had some interest at the meeting, was the possibility to create BCCS Tokens with a Barber Obverse and BCCS reverse with our name and web address on it. I took the task of investigating and hope to have some information to discuss with Phil and Eileen soon.

We actually stayed past the meeting time, discussing challenging dates and looking at the "show and tell" coins. Hope to see you all there in Orlando next year!



BCCS "blind" Email List

The BCCS web service has the capability to send messages using a "Blind Carbon Copy" setting, which means everyone on the list gets the email, but nobody's email address is displayed. The advantages to having such a list include the ability to post last-minute BCCS get-togethers at regional shows and other types of Society communications, if needed, without having to wait for the next issue of the *Journal*. It is completely voluntary, and is open to members only. If you wish to be on this list, please send an email to: BCCS@BarberCoins.org and your name will be added. Your information will not be disclosed to anyone, and you will only receive email regarding BCCS business from the BCCS email account.

Barber Bits *continued on page 17*

The Accidental Collector

By Tim O'Keefe

My parents decided early on that if I was going to earn money, I was going to learn to be smart about using it. For my seventh birthday, they presented me with a coin collecting starter kit - a book on what coin collecting entailed, some 2x2s, a handful of foreign coins my mom had accumulated over the years, and a couple of Indian Head cents. My folks were insistent that as long as I was spending my cash on something worthwhile, they would support and encourage me. If my allowance was going towards pinball and junk food, there would be no allowance. That was more than enough incentive to attract my attention and keep me interested.

The eastern part of Connecticut in the 1960s was not known for its abundance of coin shops. The only one in our city of Norwich was in the basement of Woolworth's, and the proprietor kept odd hours. I was basically restricted to searching my paper route money of the long-defunct Hartford Times. I came across wheat cents, Mercury dimes, and the occasional silver Washington quarter. Nothing really special, and it was always a hit-or-miss system. And forget trying to fill any gaps. I was at the mercy of whatever loose change came my way. Plus, I had to replace whatever coins I came across, which definitely ate into any profits I hoped to make.

It wasn't until 1972 when we moved to Bangor, Maine, that my collection began to take off. Twin Cities Coin was within walking distance of our new house. I was making money shoveling snow. Being Maine, there was always snow, so business was good. And the coin shop was great! The owner had an extensive mix of US and foreign coins and he didn't mind twelve-year-olds spending their afternoons hanging around the shop and digging through the lesser wares.

One of the neater attractions of this particular shop was the "25-cent surprise box." The owner had an old wooden box full of coins in paper holders. If you paid a quarter, you could select one unknown package from the rows of holders. One might get a lesser Buffalo nickel, a shiny Lincoln cent, or a silver Roosevelt dime. And occasionally, one would hit pay dirt. And this is how my Barber coin collection began. I paid my twenty-five cents one day and picked out a package containing an 1892 Barber dime. The piece was probably Good+ and I was duly impressed. I had never considered starting a Barber collection, much less knew what they were. But now I was intrigued. I actually owned something made in the previous century and I had a lot of curiosity as to what else was avail-

able. This led to the purchase of a Blue Book and a new quest to collect coins of the Barber series. I eventually branched out to the quarters and half dollars.

I spent years searching and purchasing the bulk of my Barber collection. While it is not complete and may not contain the best specimens out there, it has been a fun experience putting sets together. And it all started from a twenty-five cent investment and a lucky draw.



Barber Bits *continued from page 15*

Here are two more End-of Year Member Survey responses to the question “What are your three favorite Barbers?” More will be given in future issues as space allows.

Dan Flood:

1. 1901-S Barber Quarter (VG-8 and above) Although you see quite a few 1901-S Barber quarters below VG-8 for sale, you don't see many available at VG-8 and above. This is especially true of original, nice looking coins. The King of Barber Coinage!
2. 1901-S Barber Half (AU-58) On everyone's wish list. A nice, original (AU-58) with few marks is wanted by quite a few Barber Half collectors. This is especially true of certified (PCGS or NGC) examples in AU-55 or AU-58.
3. 1913-S Barber Quarter (XF-AU) On everyone's wish list. Quite rare in XF-AU condition. Mostly seen in VG-10 and below condition. Lowest mintage, 20th century, regular U.S. coinage. One of the “Big 3” of Barber quarters.

Brent Jackson:

My 3 favorite Barbers are quarters.

1908-D - The strike and luster on these coins is exceptional for the most part, and on the other side of the coin, the varieties abound. You could write a book on this coin alone.

1898-S and 1898-O - These are two of my first Barbers to own. They both grade AU-58 and are nicely toned and original, and I'm very fortunate to own such nice examples. The 98-S is over an O. But every Barber coin is something special.

Where Did They All Come From Anyway?

By Steve Hustad

In Phil Carrigan's opening message in the BCCS Vol. 19, No. 2 Journal, he mentions that the surveys turned in haven't responded to his extra request to share where we all like to acquire our Barbers. I guess most of us forgot, getting so wrapped up in compiling and sending in our survey data that we never remembered to get back to Phil's interesting question. Well, I saw Phil's comments in the last issue, which reminded me to respond. Okay, I'm late too.

Being an old fogey (though I haven't bought a Buick yet), things have changed quite a bit from when I first began seriously collecting coins way back in the late sixties, and then adding the Barbers (seriously) around the late seventies. I'll try to explain how buying Barbers has evolved for me, along with the coin business, from then to now.

As a kid I didn't have a driver's license of course, so coin shows were out of the question (no one wanted to drive me and then wait around cooling their heels for hours while some geeky kid poured over dozens of bourse tables...funny that!). So I was at first restricted to coin shops, generous relatives, and mail order.

The coin shops were great – especially “Coin Corner” in downtown Minneapolis that I described in an earlier article I wrote for BCCS. Those patient people taught me a lot about grading, customer service, and most importantly, what was and was not scarce. (To a 15 year-old, anything dated before 1917 seemed downright ancient, and therefore rare! “Oh, so this almost worn smooth 1911 Barber half is NOT scarce?”) Ah yes, the days of “ignorance and bliss.”

Anyway, there were other coin shops around, many malls had them, and they often sold stamps too. I haunted them all, but “Coin Corner” was my favorite. I bought one or two Barbers in G-4 or VG-8 at each stop. Those seemed plentiful and still beautiful, very enjoyable as well, and I couldn't afford better. Today, coin shops are few and far between, and sadly those that remain seem far more interested in precious metals and PCGS slabs than the nuances and history of collecting or catering to specialists like us. This is the sad reality of the storefront part of our hobby in 2008. Except there's one more key difference - they're usually not storefronts or mall operations anymore, but are located in some smallish rented office space in a suburban office building with a buzzer lock on the door.

That brings us to the “generous relative.” The generous relative is an elusive creature and highly prized by the budding young numismatist! These loving souls (bc they a parent, uncle, or grandparent) showed endless patience with my birthday and Christmas lists, and would even go to the trouble of visiting the shops I told them that had the coins I wanted on the lists. This is how I acquired the more expensive pieces as a kid early on in my collecting days. Sometimes an uncle would come through with a Liberty Head Nickel from his personal stash – just for showing up at his house for Thanksgiving with my parents! Yup. Lists, lists and more lists. I loved making lists of what I wanted for my collection. No doubt early warning signs of OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) - more on this later

The mail order business was bigger then too. I started buying all over the place, getting ‘burned’ I don’t know how many times. I was starting to collect Liberty Head Nickels then too, and I don’t know how many I ended up returning. (Doesn’t “Very Fine-20” mean that more than four letters in “Liberty” are visible Mr. Mail Order Dealer?) Funny how they never wanted to reimburse me for my postage and insurance when having to return their over-graded coins. However, I finally settled on a few very good and reliable mail order dealers, but not after culling out the “AGs” among them. A common story among us I’m sure.

Mail order has changed a bit in the interim too, but not quite as much as the shop. The biggest differences I see are the refusal to publish and mail catalogs, always referring us to websites and (like the modern day “shops”) have a far greater interest in slabbed coins, and the investment end of the hobby.

Probably their stock changes too rapidly now to maintain a mailed listing for very long, another side effect of the Internet I presume? There are still some good mail order dealers, but their stock seems to not be as expansive as in the old days, and what they do list seems to mostly ignore the collector of circulated coins. I’d guess bigger margins on the more expensive “Gem BU” stuff is driving that. The coin business is not an easy one either I’m sure, got to go where the profit is to survive and all that.

After my young teenage collecting days, I moved on to college, studying, studying girls (including a future and current wife!), and so collecting took a holiday for a few years. By now it was in the late seventies. The Beatles had long since broken up (sob!), Cat Stevens and Gordon Lightfoot were at the top of their careers (Gordon Lightfoot remains my solid favorite to this day – especially his ‘newer’ works).

All through college I had been spending every nickel I had on stereo equipment and music. But with my (second) senior year in college, I was feeling the

urge to jump back into coin collecting. Not much had changed from before, the Internet was still a dream, but vinyl LPs were starting to give way to digital music on CDs, a sign of newer technological things to come. Could big changes in the ways coins were acquired be far behind?

Now I could drive (insert panicky-faced mother here), so coin shows became reachable, and were my new obsession. Combing through the weekly listings in *Coin World* for my area, I don't think I missed a show within a 50-mile radius for about ten years! I trimmed back on ordering coins through the mail (other than with Dave Lawrence & Jack Beymer), and concentrated on the local shows. I still had my 'lists,' but now they became rather sophisticated and detailed. I recorded every Barber variety I knew of (so I'd be on the lookout), and flagged those dates/mints I felt to be scarce but not regarded yet as so. I bought a quality 10x loop and was ready. My 'obsessive compulsive' streak reared its head again for another peek – this time at the bourse floor!

One thing very nice about coin shows is the ability to see first hand what you're buying instead of the 'mystery package' that sometimes arrives in the mail. No mysteries from the ones I mentioned above, but with others, yeah there were some "surprises" shall we say? Another good thing about being there in person is that you can negotiate prices on coins you want but may feel are overpriced or overgraded – a huge advantage. I've bought a ton of Barbers (and especially Barber varieties) at coin shows.

A third advantage (and I actually should have listed this one first), is the ability to make some friends with dealers that you'd see every time no matter the venue. Those dealers who got to know you and the kinds of things you're interested in, would then be sure and bring along certain types of coins to the shows, seemingly just because they thought you'd be there! Also, I got to know them, and their grading. This is also very valuable, as knowing what to expect is half the battle I think.

I built a large collection of Barber varieties through my coin show dealer contacts. Many re-punched mintmarks and re-punched dates were discovered. Constant upgrading was also a pleasure. Then there were the coins I passed up, never to find one as nice for less than the price it was offered. Those missed opportunities come back to haunt me. Naturally, there are also a few coins I regretted buying. Can't win 'em all, right? These were learning experiences I told myself, and I'd like to think my coin buying decisions have improved because of each such error made along the way. The best part about these shows remained the dealers I got to know. Many mutually beneficial relationships developed this way, and my Barber collections grew exponentially!

Somewhere along the line, around 1995 I think, I sold off the bulk of my coin series collections. Pretty much everything was jettisoned except the three Barber series (of course!), the Liberty Head Nickels (Barbers again after all), and my Large Cents obsession, from 1816 to 1839. Everything else except all the modern (and still sadly current) series were sold. The modern stuff stayed only because it's impossible to get a decent price for any of it. Consequently, those modern sets have sat idle since about 2000 when I finally faced reality with those series. So no, just the five main areas of collecting remain.

Fast forward to 2008 and I feel like I've stepped out of a time capsule into a very different world of coin collecting and how to build a collection. Coin shows are still a big source, but they seem to be a bit fewer in number now than before, too many dealers preferring to sell through the Internet, rather than travel so much maybe? Maybe fewer collectors to attend as well? The Internet really has changed everything. Pretty much gone are the corner coin shops, coin shows seem to have also diminished in number, and eBay & Internet sales reign supreme. Now I have a confession to make. I don't like buying coins through eBay or over the Internet (did I mention I was an old fogey?) though eBay and the Internet do bring a very useful advantage to buying in that you can now see the coins you're ordering before hand, sometimes in great detail. This cuts down on a lot of potential disappointment to a large degree, but is still not foolproof as fraud and dishonesty are still rampant. This dark side was pointed out by Phil and Eileen in the very same issue of the Journal that I said prompted me to write this article. "Buyer always beware" is still the best advice. At least buying from an established coin company or well-known dealer carries with it the ability to return a coin you're not happy with. With some of these eBay sellers there is no such reputation behind them, and the risks are obviously much greater.

So what's the bottom line to all this you may be asking yourself? In short, some things, the best things, never change. And that's buying face to face at coin shows from respected dealers that you've gotten to know over time and have grown mutual friendships with. Also, buying mail order or through a trusted dealer's Internet website carries with it some of the same risks and rewards as always, but with a lot more confidence when you can view the coin online first, and when you know you're dealing with reputable companies.

Any sources I haven't touched on? I'm sure other members have their own stories and I'd sure like to read about their experiences in acquiring the elusive Barbers. One angle I'd like to explore, but never have is the local coin club. I imagine there would be maybe not as many Barber opportunities as at a coin show, but likely even greater friendships. And isn't sharing our hobby, collections and 'finds' with others of a similar bent what drives us all anyway? Happy searching!

Barber Coin Collectors' Society

1. Promotes the writing and sharing of information on Barber coins to an organization of individuals who are interested in increasing their knowledge of the series; for Society purposes, Barber coins are defined as primarily U.S. dimes, quarters and half dollars designed by Charles E. Barber, and minted from 1892 to 1916.
2. Gives Barber hobbyists an opportunity to contact other collectors with similar numismatic interests.
3. Can promote consistent grading standards among collectors, dealers, society members and non-members alike.
4. Through group purchasing power, can offer its members discounts on numismatic materials relating especially to the collecting of Barber coins.
5. Provides members a means to trade their Barbers with other members, in an effort to upgrade or complete their collection.
6. Effectively lobbies numismatic shows and events to provide Barber exhibits and space for all Barber dealers to sell their merchandise.
7. Promotes the collecting of Barbers and the hobby in general to today's youngsters.
8. Offers benefit to all Barber collectors, whether they collect Barber dimes, quarters or halves, graded AG or MS65+.
9. Makes sure its members have a say in the organization.
10. Is a not-for-profit organization dedicated solely to the benefit of its members and those who assist the Society in advancing its purpose.

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